

# 4 Amherst's Housing Current Conditions

## Housing Facts—How Do We Live?

### Total Population—13,668 (2007)

- Projected to grow to 18,071 by 2030

### Total Households—3,590 (2000)

- Projected to grow to 6,024 by 2030 or an average of about 2% (81 households) per year
- Only about  $\frac{1}{2}$  of households have children under the age of 18
- Householder over age 64 will grow from 7% in 2000 to 16% in 2030
- School age children will increase from 2,986 in 2000 to 3,953 in 2030
- 90.4% of housing units are single-family detached (2000)
- 92% of the housing is owner-occupied

### Housing Construction Trends

- Annual average of 74 new housing units per year –1995 to 2006: 100 per year from 1995 to 2000 and about 55 per year from 2000 to 2006
- Condominiums have made up more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the building permits in 2005 and 2006

### Age of Housing Units

- About 70% of houses have been built since 1970

### Size of Housing Units

- 69% of the housing has 7 or more rooms
- 16% have 5 rooms or less

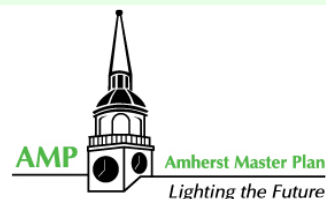
### Affordability & Fiscal Impact

- 2006 average house sales price: \$402,827
- About 80% of the households in Amherst could not afford the average sales price
- 1 and 2-bedroom homes have a positive fiscal impact on the town budget, while 3, 4, and 5-bedroom homes have a negative impact.

## What Does It Mean?

- There has been a recent shift to smaller 2 bedroom homes, some in two-unit condominium structures, developed under the Planned Residential District provisions of the Amherst Zoning Ordinance.
- 1 and 2 bedroom units will be sought by young adults just starting families and by empty nesters and retirees. These are life cycle categories expected to grow in the future indicating growing markets for smaller housing units.
- The availability of smaller less expensive housing units may help keep some young adults in Amherst, especially those in the 20 to 29 year old category, many of whom leave town.
- Parkhurst Place is the only facility of its kind in New Hampshire, providing 21 subsidized rental units and 21 market-rate rental units for elderly residents. There will be markets and opportunities to create more facilities of this type to add to the stock of housing in Amherst.

See draft section of Amherst's 2008 Master Plan Phase 1 report for additional details and sources.



# 4 Amherst's Housing What We Want

## Voice of Amherst<sup>1</sup>

*"Preserve the existing residential nature of Amherst characterized by the village, rural landscape, New England colonial architecture and small town feel."*

*"Control future residential development."*

*"Improve aesthetics in residential developments."*

*"Preserve current separation of residential and commercial uses."*

*"Maintain Amherst Village as a mixed use limited commercial rural village."*

*"Explore ways of providing affordable housing, especially for fixed income elderly and young adults."*

## Goals to Light the Future<sup>2</sup>

- Maintain the semi-rural character of the northern sections of town.
- Encourage open space in residential development.
- Encourage diversity in housing types to meet the different needs of residents.
- Reduce the fiscal impacts of large, multi-bedroom houses.



<sup>1</sup> Resident input, based on various visioning exercises.

<sup>2</sup> Developed based on Steering Committee and resident input..

# 4 Amherst's Housing What We Can Do <sup>1</sup>

## **To Maintain the Semi-rural Character in Northern Section of Town**

1. Continue Northern Rural and Northern Transitional zones with the option to use the Planned Residential District.

## **To Encourage Open Space in Residential Development**

1. The desire to maintain existing character can be met by clustering residential development in all parts of town.
2. Condominium developments (some with two units in a structure) have higher densities in the immediate vicinity of the homes, but this is off-set by the common land that is required (40% of the property to be left open, exclusive of areas for buildings, parking and septic systems).
3. Setting cluster developments back from the main road and screening them with vegetation also helps to maintain existing open character.

## **To Encourage Diversity in Housing Types to Meet the Different Needs of Residents**

1. Encourage more affordable housing to enable young people who grew up in Amherst to continue to live in town or to return. It would also enable town employees such as police, firemen, and teachers to live in town.
2. Encourage smaller units on smaller lots in selected areas, and allow larger properties in selected areas to be developed with multi-family housing, and permit mixed-

use structures in appropriate areas, such as Amherst Village and commercial shopping villages developed on Route 101A.

3. Such housing needs to be developed on tracts large enough to support a common septic system to bring the per-unit cost down to affordable limits, and depending on location, a common water supply system may need to be created to serve all homes in a development.
4. Establish a fund to purchase land for housing and/or to donate town-owned land.
5. Establish a land trust with Town funds that could be supplemented with private donations as another means of encouraging affordable housing.

## **To Reduce the Fiscal Impact of Large, Multi-bedroom Houses**

1. Smaller units have positive fiscal impacts, while 3, 4 and 5 bedroom units have negative fiscal impacts because of the numbers of school children associated with each type of unit..
2. Smaller units will be sought by young adults just starting families and by empty nesters and retirees that do not have school-age children.

<sup>1</sup> Potential objectives and strategies for discussion.

